

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 02456 041734Z

ACTION EB-08

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6409

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: GATT, AORG

SUBJ: GATT SALARY PROBLEM

REF: A. GENEVA 2392, B. STATE 64377

1. U.S., EC, AND JAPAN REPS LED BY UK AMB BOTTOMLEY (SPEAKING FOR EC) CALLED ON GATT D-G LONG APRIL 4 TO DISCUSS GATT SALARY PROBLEM. AMB BOTTOMLEY INFORMED LONG THAT COUNTRIES REPRESENTED COULD NOT ACCEPT PROPOSAL PUT FORTH BY YUGOSLAV REP TOMIC AT LAST COUNCIL MEETING (REFTEL) FOR SW. FR. 160,000 EX GRATIA PAYMENT TO SINGLE GATT EMPLOYEES, AND EXPLAINED REASONS FOR POSITION. (HE NOTED SOME OTHER COUNTRIES NOT REPRESENTED AT PRESENT MEETING HAD SIMILAR VIEWS.) HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THESE COUNTRIES WOULD LIKE TO FIND SOME WAY TO SHOW APPRECIATION TO GATT STAFF, AND SUGGESTED THAT POSSIBILITY WAS ADDITIONAL AMENITIES BUILT INTO THE GATT BUILDING PROGRAM. SUCH PROPOSAL MIGHT BE PUT FORWARD ONLY IF TWO CONDITIONS FULFILLED: 1) STAFF WOULD TAKE PROPOSAL IN SPIRIT INTENDED AND WOULD NOT CONSIDER IT DERISORY OR PROVOCATIVE; 2) THAT MONEY WOULD COME FROM TRUE SURPLUS AND THERE WOULD BE NO REQUIREMENT FOR FRESH MONEY.

2. GATT D-G LONG EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR EXPOSITION

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BIG-THREE VIEWS AND OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS MATTER INFORMALLY. HE SAID STAFF ASSOCIATION REALIZED ANY DECISION ON MATTER WOULD REQUIRE AGREEMENT OF COUNTRIES PRESENT. HE SAID HE UNABLE TO ANSWER ON THE SPOT THE TWO QUESTIONS POSED BY BOTTOMLEY. CONCERNING SECOND, HE SAID GATT SECRETARIAT MAKING EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT TO LIMIT EXPENSES BUT THAT FINAL COST OF NEW BUILDING

WON'T BE CLEAR UNTIL RENOVATION COMPLETED. HE ASSERTED THERE HAD BEEN "VIOLENT INFLATION" IN SWITZERLAND IN 1973-75 PERIOD THUS CREATING VERY DIFFICULT SITUATION FOR MAINTAINING ORIGINAL BUDGET ESTIMATES. HE STATED STAFF COMPLAINTS WERE SERIOUS LABOR RELATIONS MATTER AND HE FELT THAT TOMIC PROPOSAL NOT REALLY INCONSISTENT WITH UN COMMON SYSTEM. LONG WENT ON TO CALL ATTENTION TO WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS NEW FINANCIAL PROBLEM CONCERNING PENSIONS. HE CLAIMED THAT GENEVA STAFF GETTING ABOUT 40 PERCENT BELOW WHAT THEY SHOULD BE GETTING, WHILE NEW YORK STAFF GETTING ABOUT 10 PERCENT MORE THAN WHAT JUSTIFIED. HE SAID HE FELT OBLIGED TO MAKE STATEMENT ON MATTER AT NEXT COUNCIL. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, HE INDICATED PENSION MATTER HAD NO PARTICULAR GATT ASPECTS, I.E., IT APPLIED EQUALLY TO ALL GENEVA STAFF. (WE UNDERSTAND, IN FACT, IT REALLY APPLIES TO UN EMPLOYEES RETIRING IN SWITZERLAND AND OTHER COUNTRIES WHOSE CURRENCIES HAVE APPRECIATED VIS-A-VIS EMPLOYEES WHO RETIRE IN COUNTRIES WHOSE CURRENCIES HAVE DEPRECIATED.) LONG WAS UNABLE TO INDICATE ANY RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WHICH HAVE AGGRAVATED SITUATION. CONCERNING SOLUTION, HE STATED THAT PROPOSAL MADE SOME TIME AGO BY UN PENSIONS BOARD AND WHICH HAD BEEN TURNED DOWN BY ACABQ WOULD BE ADEQUATE SOLUTION. HE THOUGHT THAT IF REPS OF COUNTRIES REPRESENTED COULD INDICATE SUPPORT FOR PENSION BOARD PROPOSAL AT NEXT COUNCIL MEETING, THIS WOULD HELP RELIEVE ANY STAFF DISAPPOINTMENT CONCERNING REJECTION OF TOMIC PROPOSAL.

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3. CONCERNING TIMING OF NEXT COUNCIL, LONG INDICATED THAT UNLESS THERE WERE UNEXPECTED DEVELOPMENTS, IT WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE NEEDED BEFORE END OF MAY. SORENSON

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